



Department of Justice

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FLORIDA ALUMINUM COMPANY AND ITS OWNER CHARGED WITH FIXING PRICES

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A nationwide investigation into price fixing in the painted aluminum industry has led to criminal charges being filed today against a Florida aluminum company and its chief executive. This is the second set of charges to come out of the investigation which is being conducted by the Justice Department's Antitrust Division and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Wrisco Industries Inc., of West Palm Beach, Florida, and its owner and president, Agostino James Monastra, were charged in a criminal case filed in U.S. District Court in West Palm Beach with conspiring with other sellers of painted aluminum products to fix, raise, and maintain prices of painted aluminum products they sold throughout the United States.

The most common examples of painted aluminum products are the canopies and signs that are painted brand-related colors and installed at gasoline stations and convenience stores that have gasoline pumps.

Anne K. Bingaman, Assistant Attorney General for the Antitrust Division, said the conspiracy was formed in January 1995 and ended in July 1995, a few weeks after FBI agents searched the offices of Wrisco and Alliance Metals Inc., a competitor based in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Alliance Metals and its president and owner, Bradley B. Evans, pleaded guilty to fixing prices in November 1995. On

February 12, 1996, Alliance Metals was fined \$1.15 million and Bradley Evans was sentenced to six months house arrest and placed on probation for 42 months.

"Those who conspire to drive up the price of products should expect to face criminal charges," Bingaman said.

Bingaman said that the investigation, which is being conducted by the Division's Atlanta Field Office, with the assistance of the FBI in Atlanta, Philadelphia, and West Palm Beach, will continue.

The charges arose in connection with a grand jury investigation in Atlanta into collusive practices by sellers of painted aluminum products, Bingaman added.

The maximum penalty for a corporation convicted of a violation of the Sherman Act is the greatest of a fine of \$10 million, twice the gross pecuniary gain the defendant derived from the crime, or twice the gross pecuniary loss caused to the victims of the crime.

The maximum penalty for an individual convicted of a violation of the Sherman Act is a period of incarceration of three years and the greatest of a fine of \$350,000, twice the gross pecuniary gain the defendant derived from the crime, or twice the gross pecuniary loss caused to the victims of the crime.

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